Killings by Elephants in Assam

488. SHRI K. KALAVENKATA RAO:
SHRI SOLIPETA RAMACHANDRA REDDY:

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether herds of wild elephants are wreaking havoc on villagers in Upper Assam distrsicts, especially in Digboi and 1000 people lost their lives at the hands of wild elephants since 1981;

(b) if so, the reasons for tuskers leaving the reserved forests; and

(c) the action proposed to ensure proper maintenance of nearby reserved forests for their food and habitat and save the villagers from such raids threatening their lives in the area?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI BABULAL MARANDI): (a) and (b) The State Government of Assam have reported that only 25 persons were killed by wild elephants in Digboi Division since 1981. Elephants are migratory animals and require large uninterrupted forest areas to meet their habitat needs. However, due to encroachments, development of agriculture and human settlements along traditional migratory routes, wild elephants come into conflict with human beings and cause depredations to life and property.

(c) The following steps are being taken to prevent such depredations:

(i) development of habitat through plantation of food plants and soil and water conservation;

(ii) erection of power fencing and elephant proof trenches to prevent wild elephants from straying into human habitations and cultivation areas;

(iii) formation of anti-depredation squads comprising local villagers using fire crackers and trained elephants to drive away wild elephants;

(iv) payment of ex-gratia and compensation for crop damage and human deaths due to wild elephants; and

(v) capture of problem elephants.

Proposal of Nepal Government for felling of Trees

489. SHRI RAJNATH SINGH 'SURYA': Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Government of Nepal has proposed to permit tree felling in Tarai region;

(b) if so, what would be the consequences in Indian areas along these borders;

(c) whether Government have taken up this matter with the Government of Nepal; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI BABULAL MARANDI): (a) This Ministry is not aware of the fact that the Government of Nepal has proposed to permit felling of trees in Tarai region.

(b) to (d) The facts in this regard are being ascertained with Government of Nepal through proper channel.